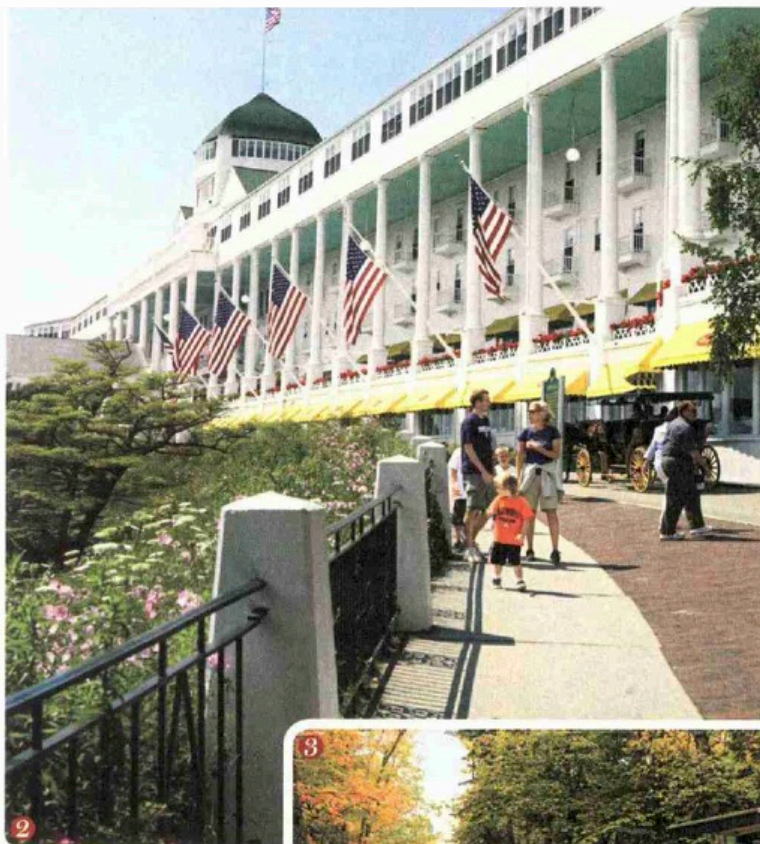


# Midwest Living

BEST OF THE MIDWEST | MICHIGAN

## Mackinac area

A ferry ride beyond the history-rich tip of the lower peninsula, the famously Victorian and car-free island continues to lure generations of travelers. | [mackinacisland.org](http://mackinacisland.org)



### 3 Carriage tours

A horse-drawn carriage ride gives a good overview of the island's interior and state historic park; operators line Main Street. Hire a horse-drawn taxi, or you can drive a rented horse and buggy outside downtown.

**Ferries** Three lines shuttle visitors to the island. To avoid waits, order tickets online from Arnold Transit Company, Shepler's or Star Line.

**Mackinac State Historic Parks** Kids can dress up like soldiers and play a giant fife (a flutelike instrument) at Fort Mackinac, a historic

military outpost on Mackinac Island. Across the straits in Mackinaw City, Colonial Michilimackinac keeps kids engrossed watching musket and cannon firings, cooking, and crafting demonstrations. This reconstructed fort and fur-trading post sits near the Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse; climb to the top of the 1889 tower and tour the keeper's quarters. These sites, nearby **1** Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park (with zipline tours) and a handful of other family-friendly attractions combine to make Mackinac State Historic Parks.

**Mackinaw Crossings** In Mackinaw City, a complex of more than 40 shops and eateries makes a good rainy-day or evening stop. Stick around for free nightly laser light shows.

**Shepler's Lighthouse Cruises** Three- to five-hour cruises are available June through mid-September; reservations recommended.

**Woods and Water Ecotours** Sign on for guided hiking, biking and kayaking tours or rent equipment from this Hessel outfitter.



### EAT Bessie's Original Homemade Pasties

The St. Ignace cafe claims a loyal following for its hearty, traditional meat pies.

**Joann's Fudge** This is just one of the places to find the quintessential Mackinac treat.

**Scalawags Whitefish and Chips** Fresh perch and walleye fill baskets with fries, creamy coleslaw and hush puppies.

**Woods** Run by the Grand Hotel, this Bavarian-style mansion serves casual dinners.

### STAY Chippewa Hotel Waterfront

Balconies take advantage of the refurbished 1902 hotel's location. The Pink Pony patio serves casual fare (from \$180).

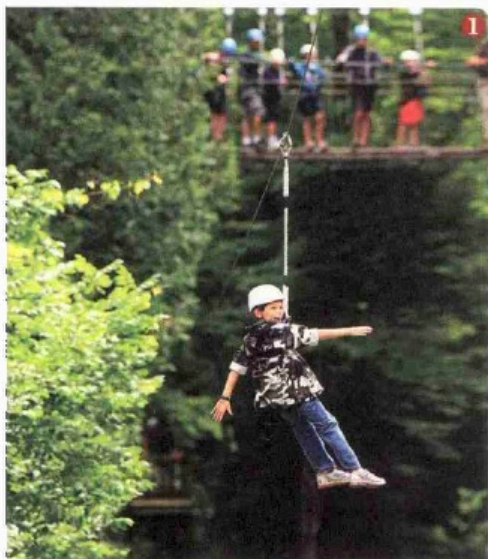
**2 Grand Hotel** For an unforgettable experience, stay at this Victorian-Era landmark, with its 660-foot front porch overlooking the straits. Or at least dine there (from \$418).

**Mission Point Resort** Behind the expanse of lakefront lawn, the pet-friendly resort offers a range of stays (from \$149).

### SAVE THE DATE

#### MACKINAC BRIDGE WALK

On Labor Day, tens of thousands of walkers gather in St. Ignace for the annual 5-mile trek across one of the world's longest suspension bridges, which links the Lower and Upper peninsulas. | [mackinacbridge.org](http://mackinacbridge.org)



## SPOTLIGHT

### Lilac Festival

Although most Midwest lilac blooms are gone by late May, thousands of them are bursting with color in June when Mackinac Island holds its annual Lilac Festival (June 3–12, 2016). The blooms that inspire us to throw open windows for a whiff at home offer a near total-immersion experience on the island. "They don't grow like this anywhere else in the world," says lilac specialist Jeff Young. "The island has lilacs that can grow 40 feet tall and are more than 100 years old." Lilacs arrived with New England settlers then later with wealthy homeowners who planted the pink, blue, white and lavender bloomers to appeal to tourists. The shrubs took to Mackinac's cold winters, Great Lakes breezes and limestone much like the million annual tourists have taken to the island's century-old flavor. The Lilac Festival celebrates that fortuitous pairing for 10 days, with events like music,



lilac tours, the Taste of Mackinac, a dog and pony show, and a grand parade with bands and horse-drawn floats. But the highlight is simply walking down streets fragrant with pastel panicles. Even if blossoms aren't at their peak (blooms last up to three weeks, with early-, mid- and late-blooming varieties), it's the perfect time to savor the sight of lilacs beside the Great Lakes without summer crowds.

[mackinacisland.org](http://mackinacisland.org)